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# American Held in Managua Tells of a 'Love of Military'

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua, Dec. 22 — An American captured outside a restricted Nicaraguan air base was presented publicly today for the first time since his arrest, and gave a confused account of his motives and background.

The American, Sam Nesley Hall, was seized Dec. 12 near the Punta Huete base a few miles from Managua. Authorities showed hand-drawn maps they said they had found hidden on his person.

Mr. Hall's statements to interrogators, as well as the apparently amateurish manner in which he was operating at the time of his arrest, have led Sandinista leaders to conclude that he is probably not connected to any official American espionage operation, according to informed officials.

Mr. Hall said that in 1984, he visited the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in Langley, Va., for discussions about forming a private agency, the purpose of which he did not specify.

"A group was to be formed and I was to lead it as an individual," he said. "They called it an American foreign legion."

## Denies Government Role

Mr. Hall, who offered a similar account in an interview broadcast Sunday on the CBS News program "60 Minutes," said the group never came into being and that "right now" he was its only member.

"I was working for an independent group in America," he said. "My sole purpose was to come here to find information only. I carried no weapons."

"I'm not working for the United States Government that I know of," he said. "I can honestly say that."

"There was information that needed confirmation, that one of the large bases here outside of Managua, that

there was a number of Cuban assembly crews assembling the MI-24's, the Hind-B's." MI-24 attack helicopters are considered among the most potent weapons in the Sandinista arsenal.

"Also, I wanted to see what kind of new construction was underway," he added.

A security official who accompanied Mr. Hall today, Capt. Oscar Loza, said Mr. Hall was in Nicaragua "to carry out missions of a terrorist character."

Mr. Hall hinted that he had conducted other reconnaissance missions during his stay in Nicaragua, but gave no details.

## Differing Nicaraguan Views

President Daniel Ortega Saavedra said after Mr. Hall's arrest that the prisoner was working "to promote terrorist actions by the United States Government." Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann said the alleged spy was collecting data that would only be useful to Nicaragua's enemies.

Intelligence specialists have said in recent days that United States espionage agencies possess detailed information on bases such as Punta Huete from aerial photography and other sources.

Last week, Senator Christopher Dodd, Democrat of Connecticut, visited Mr. Hall in jail. He later held meetings with senior Government leaders, including a lengthy session with President Ortega.

Senator Dodd said there was "a lot of eyeball-rolling" among Sandinistas familiar with the Hall case.

"I think they realize what they have and what they don't have," the Senator said in a telephone interview. "It sounds like a guy who read a classified ad in Soldier of Fortune magazine."